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CHINATOWN

AS I SAW IT.

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CHINATOWN AS I SAW IT.

HAVING been invited to make a nocturnal tour through the Chinese section of New York City, in company with several Christian philanthropists, to gain an insight of what, to the large majority, is a mysterious and depraved *terra incognito,* I availed myself of the opportunity it gave me to obtain an accurate knowledge of the actual state of affairs there. The object lessons, presented during the hour or so spent in this investigation, enlarges on my memory as does the picture drawn on the slide when thrown upon the screen.

Our facilities for securing correct information were unparalleled, and what we saw and learned was absolutely honest and unbiassed.

The usual method adopted, is to visit these localities in company with a detective or some one holding legal authority. These are well known by the subjects sought after, and naturally, knowing that they have no kindly sympathy, the parties would be placed in antagonistic defense and their hearts locked and barred.

Our contact was peculiarly opportune, and at onc disarmed them of suspicion, dispelled reserve and opene hearts that brought to light, candid, honest and thri ling disclosures.

For once we were under the custody of a woman, an for the time being as the instrument and servant c Christ she carried our lives in her hand.

A most devoted woman is this female missionary, wh has given her life to this work, and in spite of th herculean task before her, has accomplished result which struck me with dumb amazement.

Sustained by the irresistable power of the Holy Ghost she has gained intimate access to the inner life; and th appreciation of the Christ-love glowing in her heart fo them, has induced, not only candor, but intense recipro cal love on the part of those she seeks so earnestly t benefit, and her influence and power is simply marvelous

Cæsar's bulletin was "*Veni, Vidi, Vici,*" but in making invasion of this stronghold of depravity, we may truthfully say, *Veni, Vidi,* but there we are compelled to halt. The *Vici* can be accomplished by Divine power alone. Gideon is powerless, but "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon" is irresistable.

I am fully aware that, on that night, she only raised a corner of the vail which hangs before this awful condition of affairs.

What we did see and hear was appalling, but she could have taken us to scenes far exceeding them in degradation and vice.

But let us go forward, piloted by our devoted guide:

My companions being experienced and apt, both in appeal and persuasion, my vocation resolved itself into silent observation, by eye and ear—allowing no circumstance—no, not a flush or change of expression to pass unnoticed and studying closely, not only actions but words; also, endeavoring to read the motives prompting them, even though they be constrained by passion or hidden by long training in crime.

Will the reader follow closely each statement in interview, and in succeeding paragraphs will be found comments and deductions therefrom.

"Follow me," said our missionary guide. "Have you any matches?" And up narrow stairs we followed on—Indian file—striking matches to light our steps.

The approaching vistas were a mystery, and we little imagined what would burst upon our vision—we were constrained to anticipate squalor, dirt and exhibitions of deepest depravity that wonld make us sick at heart.

Our guide knocked at the door, and on response, in we filed to view a scene that dazed us with amazement.

On entry, we were met by a finely built young woman of superior bearing and carriage indicative of the fact

that she did not emanate from the lower walks of life, but had had the advantage of good education.

Though somewhat embarrassed by our presence, her reception and conversation was respectful—I may say, lady like.

She answered questions put to her, naturally somewhat reluctantly, but, modestly and without a sign of arrogance or vulgarity, and throughout the interview there was nothing to offend the most fastidious sensibilities.

Her style of dress was neat and refined as any in more reputable walks of life, and the apartment, instead of what we anticipated, was as tidy, clean and tasty a little home as could be wished for under more auspicious conditions.

On enquiry, we found that she had come from a good family, that she had been well brought up, and that she has a mother in good circumstances.

But, sad to state, this young woman is a victim to the accursed opium habit, and is living in concubinage with a Chinaman. On this latter relationship, particular enquiry was made, resulting in emphatic declaration of kindness and consideration on his part, which could but induce reciprocal attachment.

To earnest prayers and pleadings she listened respectfully, but whether they impressed her, we had little indication, as she held her words and feelings under control.

We parted from her, heart sick that one who could have been an ornament to any household, should be enslaved by such a soul destroying habit and buried alive in such sad surroundings.

The scene changes as we visit another of these lamentable abodes, and as we enter the room I will endeavor to describe the surroundings. Never have I seen more immaculately clean or tidy a room on either side of the Atlantic; the furniture was not expensive, but showed emphatically the industry of the housekeeper—my eye scanned every item carefully. The mirror was bright, without a bloom on it. The table was covered with a neat cloth, and the lamp was clean and bright. In the alcove, I could see the full sized bed properly made, and the linen was white as driven snow. New England ladies, I have been told, are fastidious housekeepers, but my impression is, that, as far as these rooms are concerned, they could not exceed them in order, neatness and cleanliness. They would find here a close competitor. I have enlarged on this point, and shall make my comments later on.

A sad, sad spectacle then presented itself! Sitting at the table was a young girl of exceptional and classic beauty. Her features were regular and beautiful—a fitting model for the chisel of a Chantrey or a Powers. As I sat opposite her, I scanned her countenance

most intently during the interview, to divine the disposition unexpressed, or the working of repressed emotions. As I watched the variations of expression, I noted that rigidity indicative of sad schooling.

She was not communicative, but the information had to be drawn from her by skilful persuasion, but what we did learn made hearts ache.

This beautiful girl is now only eighteen—ruined as a child, she became a mother, and then as an outcast entered into Mongolian concubinage.

The endeavor was made to learn somewhat of her family origin and training, and what was our surprise to gain the confession that she has a mother, who, she said, is a Presbyterian, and a church member in good standing. This was made the means of appeal, and tenderly was depicted a Christian mother's tearful prayers.

She had hitherto been stolid, but this allusion to her mother's love was too much for her—her head bowed on her hands and she burst into a flood of tears. While this interview was proceeding a knock came to the door. The lady missionary went calmly to the door; "John, you cannot come in yet." He left, leaving our guide in power in his own apartment. This will show the self-possession, or rather the Christ-possessing-power this noble woman has. It seemed a vivid repetition of the words of the disciples to the Master, "Lord, even the

devils are subject unto us in Thy name."

We know not the verity of this girl's statement, but we do know that the just retribution of an all avenging God will be meeted out to the prime factor in her downfall.

We pass on from this scene, with hearts made sadder and sympathy and pity deeply stirred.

But again the curtain is raised for another living picture, and we enter a room to find four women engaged in dress making. This room had the aspect of the dwelling of an ordinary mechanic, and the women were industriously making their clothes. One of the party was sitting at the machine, sewing. She told us that she was married to a Chinaman, with whom she is satisfied; and gets good treatment. Another of the women acknowledged that she is *living with* a Chinaman. Since we saw her, the tidings has reached us that, influenced by the advice and pleadings, she has quit the evil life and its surroundings and rejoined her family. Thank God for that spark of hope.

Another of the company, we were delighted to find, was only a friend or relative, and that she was under religious influence; and her power would be felt in this family circle.

Our missionary guide pointed to us a photograph on the wall—of a young girl, a brand plucked from the burning, and now a jewel in Christ's Crown—taken but

a week before she died.

Parting from this family circle, after admonishing and praying with them, we went into Doyers Street Mission, and though nearly midnight, the evangelistic work was in full blast.

One of the young women followed us thither, and my friend secured the opportunity to drive the matter nearer home to her heart.

It is not apposite to give details of the incidents at the meeting; they were thrilling, but did not relate to the subject I am now considering.

The meeting being closed, our worthy missionary parted from us, and turned homeward.

Though past midnight, we were transported into a neighboring Chinese restaurant to sample a dish, the name of which I will not venture to pronounce. In our party, was a lady from the mission—a lion-hearted woman—whose influence, if not equal to our missionary, is a close parallel in her own sphere; she was followed by a pleasant and agreeable young woman, who clung to her with fond attachment. Respecting her, I shall allude later on. At the adjoining table, sat a young girl pale faced, hollow eyed, and smoking cigarettes—evidently fast hastening to eternity.

In the small hours of the morning we wended our way homeward—wiser, thoughtful and soul-stirred men.

Now, reproducing these vivid scenes in my memory, allow me to deduce some conclusions therefrom.

On the start, let me say, that I anticipate the retort that I have not depicted the condition in anything like its actual abomination. My friend, I did not set out to describe a "Chamber of Horrors." I could surfeit the most sensual if I wanted to, but my object is far diverse. If you wanted to study drunkenness, would you go to the alcoholic ward at Bellevue Hospital and wrestle with a man violent with the "Jim-Jams?" I guess not!

I have known men on whom liquor held dominion, and whose money went like water through a sieve. Possessing reasoning power, they saw whither they were drifting and put the foot down firm and quit its use. To-day, the family have a devoted and self-denying father, and the employer a reliable, steady man.

In like manner, I do not seek my subject from the most besotted by this soul-destroying drug or those given over to utter beastiality. I prefer the milder types, where the mental faculties are not wholly stunted or obliterated, and where, in the intervals of sanity, influence can be exerted on the intellect, reason and the finer sensibilities. The physician prefers to treat disease in the incipient stage, and not when the fever has raged its worst, and the patient is beyond hope.

I leave others to depict the *superlative* horrors—the

positive degree is positive enough and base enough for my purpose, God knows! If these are mild cases, then, Great God, human effort wilts and contemplation almost despairs of success.

I have already alluded to the young woman we met in the restaurant. The lion-hearted lady, who had joined our party, has wrestled with her for four years—yes—for four weary years has she kept up the fight.

She has drawn her closer to her, evoking the tenderest affection—she has opened to her the social freedom of her home, and she visits her daily. But in spite of all this, I may almost say superhuman effort, the damnable passion holds its sway, and she cannot—no she cannot release herself from its thraldom. Great God in Heaven, what is to be done, what can be done?

Now let me ask a few questions, and answer them :—

Who is to blame for this lamentable state of affairs?

Is it just to lay the blame and obloquy on the head of the Mongolian? I challenge refutation of my statement that the cases are rare in which "John Chinaman" is prime factor in this iniquity. He simply takes the white man's leavings, and picks up the white man's squeezed and discarded orange. Whatever abhorrance we may have for the life he leads it is our duty to fix the blame on the right culprit.

Is the girl wholly to blame?

Whatever evil tendency she may have, the instances are rare in which she will not jealously defend her honor, and it is only by vile machinations, by seductive promises or inducements that she yields that honor, or else it is robbed from her by force. Where then shall we search for the right criminal to bring him to the bar of righteous condemnation?

It is far from my object to impugn the purity of the franchise, but this I will say—It is my belief, that not only in America, but in every other so-called civilized country, there is scarcely one of these villains who is not a voter, and dares to march boldly to the polls as a mock patriot. I make this statement for a specific object, for such hypocritical scoundrels will dare to legislate against the Chinaman or the Indian.

Let us do a little figuring—say that only the minimum of one per cent of the voters are thus impugnable, the result would be appalling, even in the total votes cast in New York City alone; and such a host of social pirates and propagators of beastiality are thus to be palmed on society, as honest, pure men, and patriotic citizens. Would that God would raise up in this day a Nathan, the prophet, who would identify and challenge these social cancers—"Thou art the man."

Now a step further: What elements have we to contend with in the existing condition of affairs?

I.—Chronic Laziness. This feature may not have been observed by the casual reader, but by careful enquiry and observation I am led to this conclusion. I have alluded emphatically to the scrupulous neatness and cleanliness of the rooms we visited. If the reader imagines that this is attributable to the industry of the woman, let him forthwith dismiss such error from his mind. "John" stands in constant fear that he may lose his hold on his victim, and that any day she may quit his company. He, therefore, allows her to live a life of—I may say—luxurious idleness. It is he, and he alone, who keeps the home—if it may be styled a home—neat and clean. Such meritricious praise is due to him alone—she is the idle toy of his lust. He waits on her, hand and foot, and satisfies all her desires.

II.—The kind and attentive treatment she receives from the Chinaman, as compared with the treatment the "unfortunate" receives under more, so-called, civilized conditions. We have only to ask those noble women, the S. A. Rescue Lasses, to learn the life these most unhappy creatures lead, say in the "Tenderloin" in New York, or the Regent Street section of the City of London.

No difference can be found wherever we look. In addition to the curse and disgrace they bear, they are chased around, bullied and harried on, to provide the wages of corrupt avarice of those who live sumptuous-

ly on their sinful life. Is it to be surprised at, that possessing neither moral nor religious restraint, having suffered the tyrannical persecution of "civilized" surroundings, she flees such brutality, and submits to Mongolian concubinage, which brings with it an easy life, and the satisfaction of every desire ?

III.—The damning power and fascination of the opium habit. I have already alluded to the young woman I met in the restaurant, who has been for four years wrestling with the demon that holds such a power over her. Once yield to its influence, and its power is, humanly speaking, insurmountable. Scarcely a girl comes into companionship and influence of a Chinaman, but she is drawn into the snare of this habit, and once engaged in, it is too sadly apparent what a hold it asserts on soul and body. Now, in conclusion, let me summarize and focalize the whole matter.

What remedy and action can be adopted to counteract and correct this appalling evil ?

Most assuredly, not by invasion of the general public, either prompted by philanthropy or idle curiosity.

Finding themselves under continual espionage, will either irritate them, and induce antagonistic violence, and thus frustrate the beneficial influence now being exerted over them—or else, being made a show of, will flatter their vanity and perpetuate the evil.

This acute but chronic moral disease needs most skilful treatment, and rare indeed is it to find the man or woman competent to grapple with it. God raises up one and another in His good time, and to them should be left this important work—the church and philanthropists upholding them in it.

In 1 Sam. xxx, 24, is recorded an important decision, made by David, that those who guarded the "stuff" merited reward equally with those who went to the front to fight. My province is not aggressive warfare, but I can guard and look after the "stuff," and "stuff" is absolutely necessary to enable the warfare to be aggressive. This paper is the spontaneous result of impressions made by my visit, and prompted or suggested by no one.

Though no intimation has been made to me, I know fully the condition in which matters now stand. Mrs. Booth's Rescue Home is full to repletion, and Mrs. Whittemore's Home is equally congested, and to-day there is not a single home to which a plucked brand could be sent.

My impression is, that girls of this class require specific surroundings, and to be removed utterly from this festering hot-bed of vice. A home in the country, where God's nature replaces man's corruption, and where the sight of the pure *Water-lily*, the modest and retiring

Violet, or the innocent though suggestive *Forget-me-not* may excite thoughts far divergent from those inspired by their present environment.

In spite of the demoralization to which they have sunk, I affirm emphatically, that these girls are human, and, though hardened by vice, are still amenable to finer sentiments. Love of elegance and beauty is shown by their inordinate love of dress and ornaments; but they can be led to admire a pure lily—more glorious than Solomon in all his glory.

Many a gentleman, or lady expends a vast sum for a ball, dinner, or other social or public entertainment.

My views are far from plebian, and I maintain that it is justifiable to uphold the station of life in which we are placed. But I appeal to such a man of influence, when you retire to rest, and lay your head upon your pillow, committing to God the care of your body for the night, would it not give a thrill of joy to know that, by your benificence, a home was at that moment in active operation, in which many a poor girl would look to you as her benefactor and rescuer? And how would God think about it? Should my words awaken suggestion, or this humble effort be the nucleus to create such an oasis, my heart would rejoice, and I would thank God for thus crowning my labor with success.

Only a faint allusion can be made in this brief paper

to the work before us. We have a very peculiar condition of things to contend with—ordinary methods would be futile and powerless. Special and peculiar means must be resorted to, if we look for success.

The wail from Macedonia, that appealed so forcefully to the Apostle Paul, was not more distinct than the ceaseless and pitiable cry: "Won't you come down to Chinatown to help us?" This earnest plaint is addressed not to a general public—they don't want them—but to certain Christian workers, whom they know have their interests at heart, and whom they feel they can trust, and to whom they can look for deliverance.

—*Pilgrim.*

IF interest be excited by the perusal of this paper, and more definite information be sought, I would refer the reader to the PASTOR, CAMP MEMORIAL CHURCH, Chrystie Street, New York City. His experience enables him to form accurate judgment, and what information he gives will be reliable, and funds entrusted to him for this work will be wisely administered.

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